

VZCZCXRO1494
OO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHKI #0385 0920958
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 020958Z APR 07 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5893
INFO RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0032
RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0490
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 000385

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/02/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [ASEC](#) [PO](#) [SF](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: BEMBA DEPARTURE DELAYED

Classified By: Ambassador Roger Meece. Reason 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) The departure for Portugal of former Vice President Bemba has been delayed from the original hoped-for date of Saturday, March 31, but the initiative still appears on track. Per telcons with UN SRSG Bill Swing and South African Charge Kenneth Pedro, discussions headed by National Assembly President Vital Kamerhe continue. Perhaps predictably, however, a number of yet unresolved questions have delayed a final decision.

¶2. (C) Perhaps most notable among the difficulties is reported continuing opposition from Prime Minister Gizenga's office. Gizenga and his principal counselor, Minister Godefried Mayobo, would still like to see a full public trial of Bemba, and thus are not enthusiastic about seeing Bemba move outside of the reach of Congolese authorities. Gizenga's position is likely based in part on principle, but is undoubtedly bolstered as well by his personal animosity fed by a sense that Bemba has refused to recognize Gizenga's authority as Prime Minister, and Gizenga's conviction that a March 21 auto accident represented a Bemba attempt to assassinate Gizenga (comment: which we find a stretch. End comment).

¶3. (C) In addition, there are innumerable detailed questions, including concurrence from the seemingly innumerable GDRC authorities and agencies who would need to be involved with aspects of Bemba's transfer to Ndjili Airport and departure from the country. With the GDRC inefficient and poorly coordinated internally in the best of circumstances, strong feelings about Bemba make achievement of agreed-upon procedures even more difficult.

¶4. (C) SRSG Swing told the Ambassador the evening of April 1 that the project to get Bemba out of the country is still on track, but he declined to specify when he expected the transfer to take place. In an April 2 telcon, South African Charge Pedro also said things seem to be moving ahead, albeit slowly, but he was not convinced Bemba would necessarily depart on Monday, April 2. Both MONUC and the South Africans are indirectly involved, as MONUC will be expected to help with logistics and likely some aspects of security for Bemba's transfer and departure; the South Africans obviously need to agree on arrangements for Bemba's departure from their compound where Bemba currently is located. The Portuguese Ambassador told Radio Okapi March 31 that Bemba had met Portugal's conditions for allowing him to enter the country by agreeing in a March 29 letter not to engage in political activity during his stay.

¶15. (C) SRSG Swing needs to leave Kinshasa the evening of April 2 for New York to deal with previously scheduled budget meetings and well as UNSC consultations prior to the debate regarding renewal of MONUC's mandate. Charge Pedro has delayed his end-of-tour departure from Kinshasa until April ¶15. The South Africans hope the new South African Ambassador will be arriving in Kinshasa around that time. Deputy SRSG Menkarios has been handling much of the liaison with Karmherhe regarding the Bemba discussions, and presumably would continue this role as necessary subsequent to Swing's departure.

¶16. (C) Comment: Bemba's transfer and departure prior to Swing's trip to New York would be preferable, but Swing's presence is not a prerequisite for Bemba's departure. The delays are not surprising given the continuing strong emotions in Kinshasa that Bemba inspires, plus the usual difficulty of simply getting anything done in Kinshasa. By now widespread press speculation over Bemba's possible departure likely has also further complicated the process from what might have been a quick discreet transfer operation. Nonetheless, Kabila appears to still be on board, and we believe Bemba will eventually leave. From our perspective, the sooner the better, if for no other reason than to reduce the chances of some unforeseen circumstance further complicating the picture. Karmherhe continues to exhibit admirable active and responsible leadership in this regard, and remains in charge of the talks, although his mandate appears from the Presidency and not the government headed by Gizenga. End comment.
MEECE